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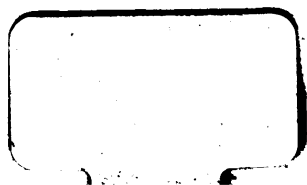
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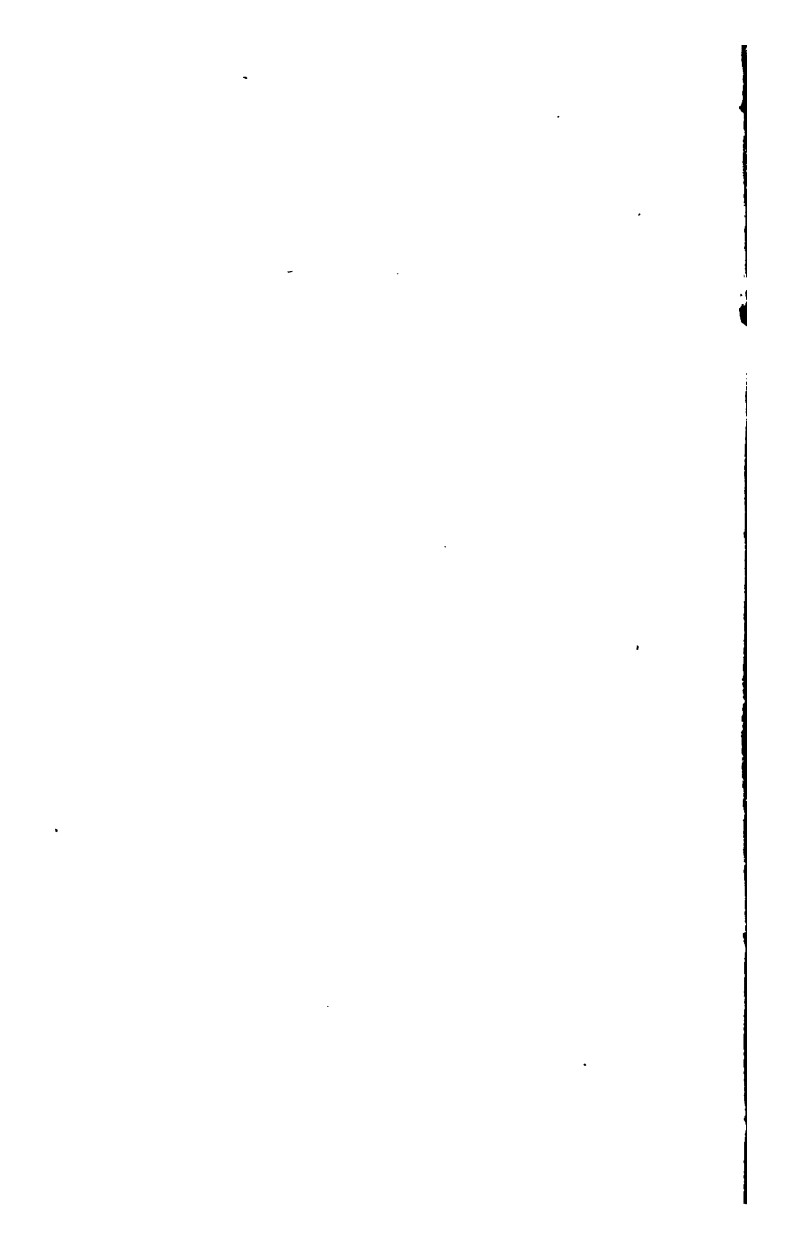
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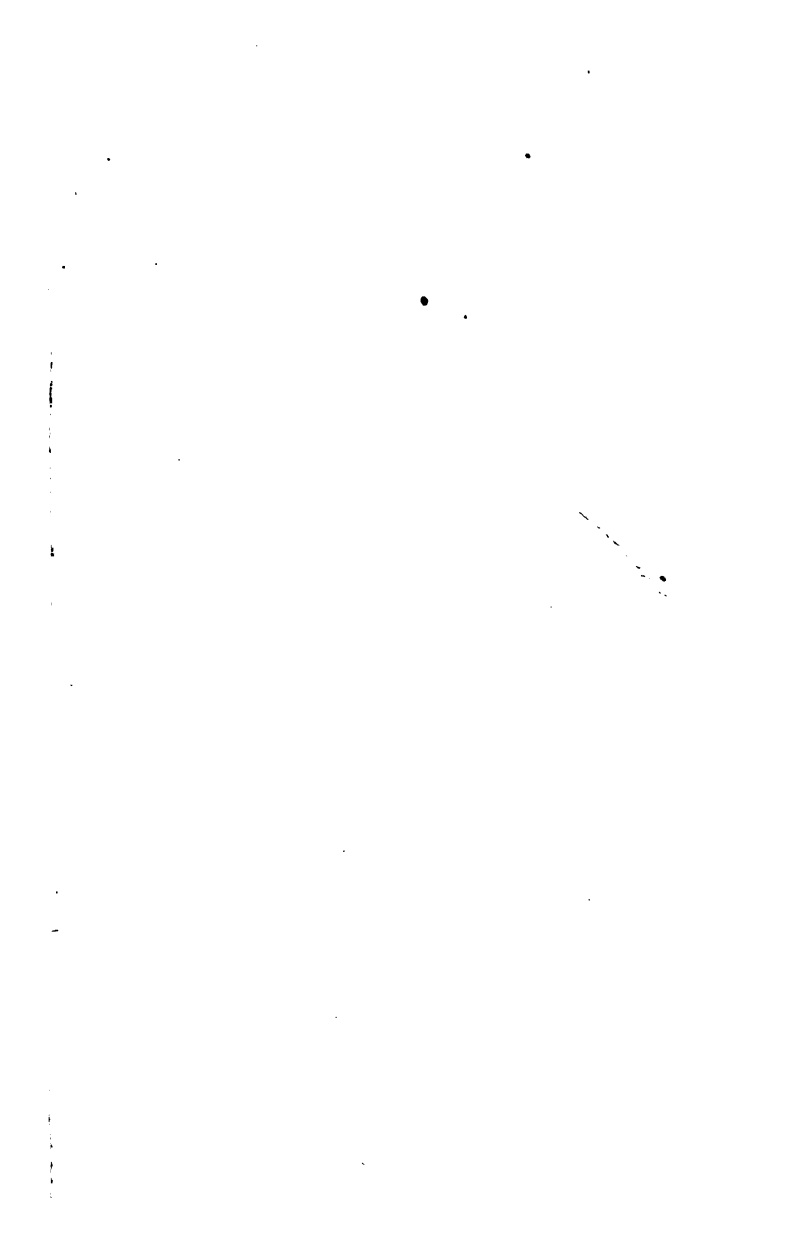
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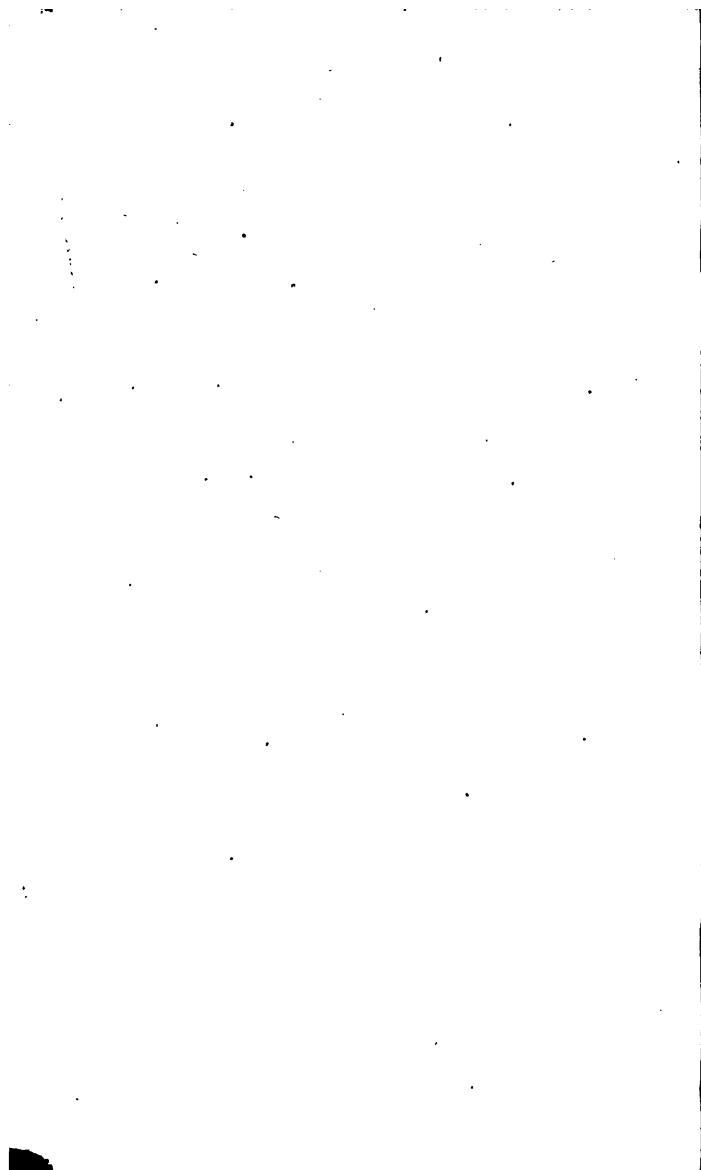
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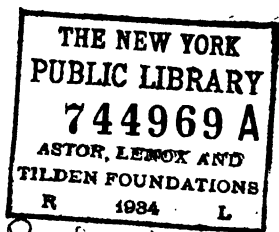
THE
ART OF CONVERSING.

WRITTEN FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF YOUTH IN
THE POLITE MANNERS AND LANGUAGE
OF THE DRAWING-ROOM.

BY A
SOCIETY OF GENTLEMEN.

"Causer est le premier des plaisirs domestiques."—DE LILLE.

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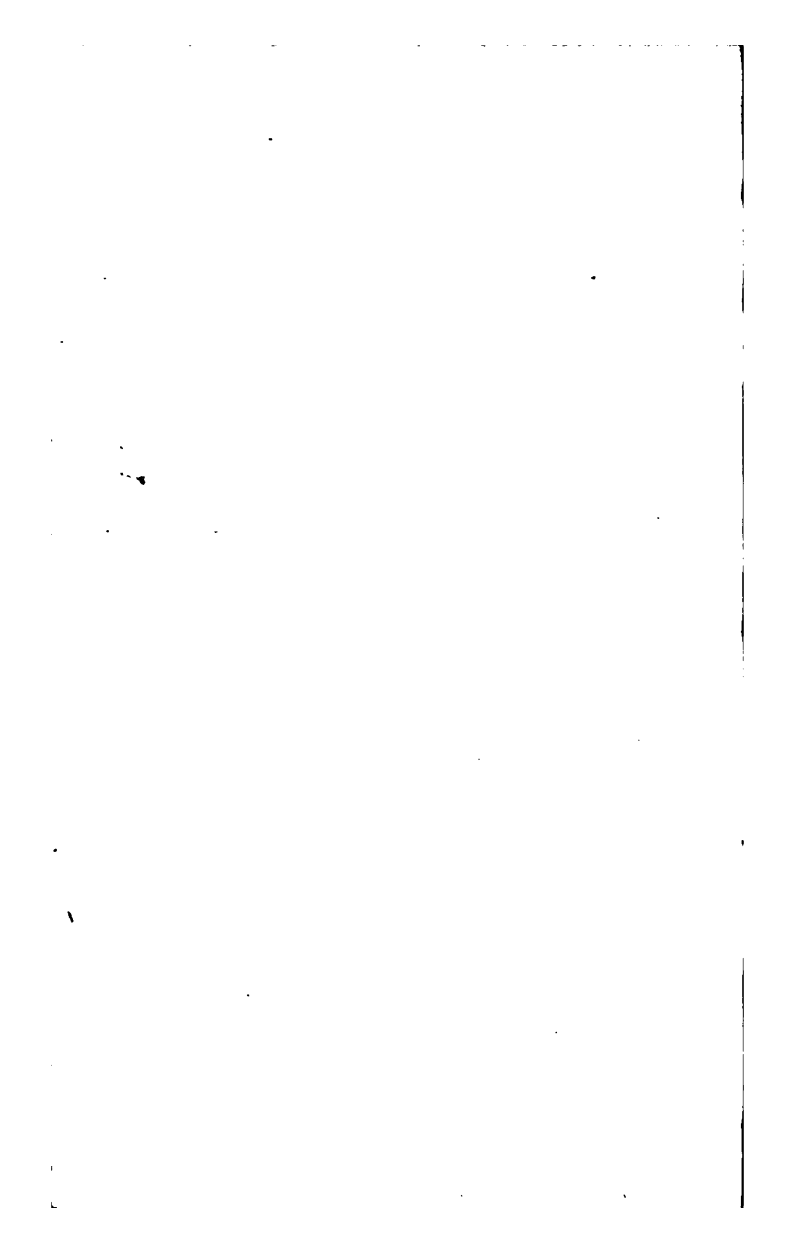
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INTRODUCTION.

SPEECH was bestowed upon man as a medium of communicating thought ; and the proper exercise of this faculty should be regarded by all in civilized life, as of the highest importance. We propose in this work, to demonstrate the refinement of conversation, to offer rules for its right use, and to treat of certain particulars relative to practice, an ignorance of which frequently places the sensible man on a level with the simpleton. In short, to indicate, as clearly as possible, the means of appearing to advantage in the private circle, in public interviews, and in every situation in which an individual may be placed. Such has been our aim and design.



CONSIDERATIONS

Upon the Use and Influence of Conversation.

1 CONVERSATION has been defined in various ways by moralists, and those who attempt to define even that which is undefinable. Points have been sharpened, antitheses rounded off, phrases re-refined, in order that a precise notion may be given, as concisely as possible, of this communication of thought by words. We have sought in vain for a satisfactory definition; we have sought in vain for a code of regulations, adapted to instruct in the exercise of this strangely neglected branch of human influence. Such may exist in the Chinese language, or in some dialect of Hindostan, but we are ignorant of any European authority to which reference can be made as a guide to the art of Conversation.

It may be necessary to observe, in the first place, that *talking* is not *conversing* ; although the words are, by many, considered as synonymous. We trust to be enabled to throw some light upon this point, in the course of our work, and to make perceptible the difference which exists between one who converses, and one who merely talks. It must be confessed that the distinction, if superficially regarded, is not very decided ; yet, that it is obvious, and of immense importance in practical life, no ‘ man of the world ’ will pretend to deny.

Let us illustrate our meaning : A person has an interest to promote, in the successful progress of which, his future happiness or temporary comfort depends. It is necessary, perhaps, to make personal application to a man of rank or influence. Previous to a final interview with this individual, many subordinates, we will suppose, must be seen and spoken with. The familiar, careless, common-place expressions, or *talking*, adapted to them, is not precisely of the same character with the conversation to be carried on, when in the presence of the one whose favor is

to be gained. A judicious selection of phrases, a regard to the impressions of sound upon the sense, a measured and guarded attention to rules, — in short, the art of *conversing*, — is an important qualification then; the scene has changed, and the speech should change also.

Conversation is, so to speak, the common mother of the various modes of speech, and seems to embrace all under one general denomination. The intelligent reader will perceive the shades of distinction. Being the grand social bond, conversation is a delight to, as well as a necessity for all. Remove it from society, and society no longer exists. The rough brutality of a selfish instinct is in shocking contrast with the fascinating charms of a refined existence. Solitude may have its pleasures to the misanthropic, for misanthropy is a disease; but man is a social being, deriving his greatest happiness from an interchange of thought; and, in proportion as that interchange is conducted with grace and propriety, in the same ratio is the blessing of speech appreciated. It rules the destiny of the state and of the individual; from diplomacy, which is the art

of conversing well upon political questions, down to daily mercantile transactions, its influence is felt,—its empire acknowledged. To it belongs the almost exclusive monopoly of the world's favors. In the private circle, amid its endearing domestic relations, great is its power; much, very much depends upon the due regulation,—the proper discipline of this glorious gift. It is not to be denied that a man may be unrefined in speech, may be too ignorant or too timid to converse well, and yet possess much personal merit. But the world, unhappily, judges only by appearances; and if it had the power, would not have the time or patience to investigate beneath the surface; it is invariably disposed to consider as stupid, him who is silent, or, who, unacquainted with the ceremonies of society, cannot attract attention to himself by the witty repartee, the just reflection, or the appropriate observation.

The objection might here be advanced, that wit, good sense, and tact cannot be acquired, and, that a stupid person will remain stupid in spite of all the theories ever broached; but, if the knowl-

edge of listening well, of asking little, and of taking advantage of expedients is acquired, it will be sufficient to free one from the imputation of stupidity. When that charge against a man issues from the lips of those who direct 'parlor opinion,' it clings like the leprosy. Vainly will then be shown certificates of capacity ; vainly will attestations of profound knowledge be made, and appeals from this severe decree to a more equitable and competent tribunal. The judgment once pronounced, even though false, is irreversible, and the excommunication lasts through life.



THE
ART OF CONVERSING.

P A R T I.

THE STUDY OF THE PHYSIOGNOMY.

BEFORE beginning to converse with any person, endeavor first to understand the mute language of the features, for physiognomy is most generally the expression of the character and sentiments of the individual.

If you observe an air of sadness upon the countenance, do not accost the person with a merry tone, or with words of gayety. On the contrary, should you perceive a look of cheerfulness and good humor, be careful not to sadden it by a serious and melancholy address.

Observe upon the countenance of your interlocutor the effect of your words; endeavor to read his thoughts; and let your eyes be constantly directed upon him, and guide you in ascertaining to what extent you may ex-
2

tiate without fatiguing, and what expressions you may make use of without displeasing. If he should have the impoliteness to interrupt you by a forced cough, by looking from side to side, or by addressing a third person, you may conclude that you have said enough.

Be concise and measured in your remarks to those of a serious temperament; abundant in words, but without prolixity to the gay and light-hearted; and never be guilty of the great indiscretion of loud and boisterous speech before any one.

“In order to know people’s real sentiments,” says Chesterfield, “I trust more to my eyes than to my ears; for they can say whatever they have a mind that I should hear; but they can seldom help looking what they have no intention that I should know.”

The study of the system of Gall as well as Lavater might furnish one with valuable hints. The admission of all the doctrines of either, however, would be dangerous, as you might sometimes be led to suspect a perfectly honest man to be a rogue, and fancy that you perceived every good quality on the cranium of a man who might steal your watch or pocket-handkerchief.

POLITENESS.

POLITENESS is a social passport all over the world, and good society is the best school in which it is to be learned.

Neither talent, wit, nor genius can conceal the positive deformity of impoliteness.

Politeness demands that you look at the face of one who may be addressing you. Turning the eyes upward and downward, to the right and to the left, indicates a distraction or an inattention which is anything but complimentary to the speaker. Occasionally, it is true, a stupid fellow will be met with, whose tone is tiresomely monotonous, and whose remarks seem interminable. You must patiently endure this infliction. It is one of the accidents of social life. Neither he nor a third person should have any reason to suppose that you are in pain.

If you have an answer to make to the person addressing you, and are anxious for him to conclude, do not manifest such impatience by twisting yourself about, standing upon one foot, frowning, convulsively moving the facial

muscles, or the limbs; but listen quietly to all that is said, and allow the speaker his own time. It is extremely uncivil to interrupt in the midst of a sentence, however long it may be. The art of listening well is as desirable an accomplishment as that of speaking well. There are some who have such an inordinate fondness for the sound of their own voices, that, if compelled to listen to others, they appear as if galvanized; thrusting out their arms at full length, and performing sundry other gymnastic movements, which would absolutely astonish the more calm and polite, though "untutored Indian."

A discussion may be sustained with politeness, and still there may be no necessity for an expressed change of opinion, or an appearance of being convinced by your opponent's arguments. Every slight inaccuracy of statement which you may notice, need not be mentioned.

Words of trivial import, of double signification, popular phrases originating from the theatre or circus, which give such extraordinary delight to that uninteresting class termed "rowdies," are not admissible in refined con-

versation. In fact, "vulgarisms" of every description should be carefully avoided.

Politeness must not be confounded with flattery or servility ; neither is it inconsistent with perfect frankness and independence.

GESTURE.

THE hands may be made to assist the expression of thought, and should never in speaking be thrust under the vest, or into the pockets.

Measured and formal movements of the hands, flourishing and "sledge-hammer" motions, are altogether out of place in conversation. The left hand, usually condemned to repose, may act advantageously with the right in public speaking, when an impressive sentence is to be pronounced ; but in conversation, it should be retained in an easy, natural position.

Neither the hands nor the garments of the person addressed should be touched. Buttoning or unbuttoning one's own coat or that of

the person spoken to, pulling down the vest, adjusting the cravat, &c., are awkward and disagreeable movements, and should never be resorted to, out of the tailor's shop, or one's own dressing room.

If an acquaintance is unexpectedly encountered, or if, in quiet conversation, a satisfactory remark is made by one with whom you are speaking, never strike him upon the shoulder—or any where else. You might seriously disturb his equilibrium. The hands ought not to be used as offensive or defensive weapons, in conversation.

Neither should a person's head be dragged down by the collar of his coat, in order that your mouth may be applied to his ear, as to a speaking-trumpet. If he is unfortunately deaf, he would more easily understand, were he able to see the movement of your lips; and if he should not be particularly "hard of hearing," such rough treatment would be very insulting. Under no circumstances does a man choose to have an infirmity conspicuously exhibited. A person yelling into the ear of another seldom looks remarkably interesting;—having more

the appearance of a cannibal in the act of devouring human flesh, than an orderly Christian.

The fingers should never be used to point at any one whom you may be speaking of to another. Politeness imperatively requires a less ostensible mode of designation. The eye will be sufficient.

MEMORY.

MEMORY is the storehouse of the mind, requiring frequent replenishing ; its power increases by exercise, and attentive reading is, for this purpose, the most appropriate practice. The man who has no memory is like a lamp without oil.

When the imagination can no longer furnish subjects of conversation, memory can then supply the material, until the former resumes its office. In society one should always have something to say.

The memory should be exercised in bringing before the mind anything we may have previ-

ously known respecting the peculiar calling of those individuals with whom we are about to converse. If they are authors, the title and character of their works ought not to be forgotten; if they are legal gentlemen, some acquaintance with their pleadings would be an essential advantage; and whatever may be their occupation or profession, it is important that it should be remembered. Forgetfulness in this respect might be productive of many erroneous and unpleasant remarks.

None are more welcome in society than those who are able to recall to memory, at appropriate seasons, short and pertinent anecdotes, which combine amusement with instruction. They should be new as well as interesting, and must be related, however humorous they may be, without laughing; also, without pretension or promises, for your hearers might be then induced to expect more than you could offer. It would be far better that they should voluntarily acknowledge the wit and interest, than that such acknowledgement should be forced from them.

READING.

It will be necessary to repair, by reading, the daily losses made in the world by conversation, and to select those writings alone which may be made the most available.

Nearly all of the novels and romances, particularly those laid upon the shelf, are unsuitable for perusal, serving only to encumber the mind ; but an acquaintance with those which are, for the time, fashionable, with some knowledge of the author, and of his literary existence, would not be useless:

Information contained in the daily journals, although in many cases of but little substantial value, is of general interest, and should not be neglected ; and particular attention ought to be paid to the records of marriages and deaths, as ignorance on those subjects has frequently led to awkward and unhappy errors.

Historical memoirs, biographies of people eminent for moral, intellectual or religious worth, and particulars relative to men holding public offices, their names, titles, &c., as con-

tained in national Almanacs, will be of utility to all. In short, every fact should be learned which has immediate reference to the existing state of society.

An indiscriminate perusal of the cheap publications which issue in such numbers from the press, containing more falsehood than truth, and more fancy than reality, will only make a lumber-room of the reader's mind, from which he can extract nothing without confusion to himself and annoyance to others.

MODESTY.

If you are not naturally a modest man, by all means endeavor to appear so.

Modesty, which is never disagreeable, consists not only in the employment of humble and polite expressions, but in the looks, the walk, the gestures, and the sound of the voice, which should be in adaptation to the sense of the words; for there is nothing more inappropriate and more ridiculous than an act of humility or of contrition made with the boisterous accent of anger, or the haughty bearing of self-conceit.

Modesty, or that which has the appearance of it, is a speculation upon the vanity of others.

Do not speak well of yourself, if you desire to be spoken well of by others.

Avoid speaking of yourself in any manner; for if you praise yourself, you will be suspected of deception; and if you depreciate yourself, you cannot be surprised if depreciated by others.

If you are desirous of indulging in a jest, and are apprehensive that the trial may be unsuccessful, modestly refer to it as one which is not original. You may thus save yourself from much mortification. (

Avoid positive assertions, and make frequent use of such phrases as the following, — “It seems to me that” — “I think that, unless I am mistaken” — “Perhaps I may be allowed to say that” — “Permit me to make an objection,” &c. &c. If you should not happen to convince those who hear you, you will not, at all events, offend them. This unassuming mode of expressing one’s self is of great weight in conversation.

ATTENTION.

THE obligation to listen is one of the fundamental laws of the social code.

The art of listening well is often preferable to that of speaking well. The chief reason why such a small number are met with, who are truly agreeable, is, that nearly all think more of what they have to say, than of listening to what is said. Many listeners, otherwise polite, appear to have great difficulty in restraining their impatience to return to what they themselves were saying; forgetting that indulgence in the gratification of one's self, is but a poor way of gratifying others; and that to hear attentively and answer concisely is one of the most important points in conversation.

Inattention is at all times more or less impolite, and under certain circumstances really outrageous. It is very difficult not to be guilty of this offence occasionally, when with those who talk foolishly; but if you bring this suffering upon yourself, since such interviews are

almost always avoidable, you are bound to endure it patiently.

To consider silent immobility as attention, is an erroneous interpretation of the law of politeness. You must prove that you have not only eyes but ears ; and a monosyllable of approbation or interest ought, at times, to be uttered, in order to satisfy the speaker that you hear and understand all that is said. Your interlocutor requires some sign of life, to be satisfied that he is not throwing away words upon an unanimated figure.

It is in no instance allowable to appear absent-minded, except when the person with whom you are speaking makes some flattering allusion to an action, work or expression, of your own. In such cases only, apparent inattention shows to some advantage.

CONVERSATION IN A DRAWING-ROOM.

A drawing-room is to be regarded as a stage upon which parts are performed before a public, that applauds or hisses, according to the merits of the actor. It is necessary to watch one's self as well as others, and to maintain a deportment and language adapted to the locality.

In the room of the merchant, where are present men of business, bankers, speculators, &c., the careless abandonment of manner which exists unnoticed there, would be decidedly out of place in the private drawing-room. The former may be a suitable place for the young aspirant to frequent, who has a certain timidity to overcome; but the abrupt, unsubdued tone so apt to be acquired there, should not be carried into the parlor. Ladies are more exacting, as to the due fulfilment of social obligations, and our attention must be, in their own precincts, immediately directed to them. Men are more accommodating, and would observe with greater indulgence that "brusque-

rie " of tone and manner which is so improper and offensive in the presence of the other sex.

When a drawing-room is entered in which many are assembled, a slight inclination of the head may be made to the party in general, but the first word uttered should be to the master or mistress of the house. When this duty is performed, the circle may be approached, and the first chance offered for entering into conversation should be unhesitatingly improved.

If the master and mistress should both chance to be absent, the situation of the visitor is rather an embarrassing one, and requires much assurance. The best part to take in such a dilemma is to appear perfectly at home, beginning to converse at once with some one, no matter with whom ; accost, question, answer, right and left, as frequently as possible ; and it is probable that, in a short time, you will have made many acquaintances, in a party of strangers, whose cold, forbidding exteriors presaged, at first, nothing but mortification and disappointment.

It is exceedingly ill-bred, though not uncommon, to whisper in company. There is no absolute need of saying to one what you would

be unwilling others should hear. If you have private business with any person, wait until you can see him alone.

Never speak in any language not understood by the company. It is equally as improper as whispering. Avoid also the introducing of phrases from the French, Italian, &c. It sounds pedantic, and your own language is sufficiently copious for the proper expression of all your thoughts.

Do not wait for an introduction, before addressing a person in a party to which you are invited. All present are presumed to be on an equality, and suitable acquaintances for each other.

When you leave a room, make your exit silently. You have no right to disturb the conversation by informing the company that you are going. It implies also too high an estimate of your own importance.

It would seem almost needless to caution against the most scandalous practice of *whistling* in a room when others are present. It is the grossest impropriety an educated man can be guilty of, and yet it is not unfrequently practised in our country. In Europe, it is almost exclusively confined to stable boys.

CONDITION.

AN essential advantage before entering a drawing-room where a party is to assemble, consists in acquiring a knowledge, by some means, of the condition of those with whom you are about to meet.. If you have had no opportunity of gaining this information previously, and anticipate finding yourself in an embarrassing situation, with regard to giving appropriate answers or making the necessary advances, hesitate not to interrogate discreetly your nearest companion.

Do not speak to a physician of diseases or of the sick, and particularly avoid everything which has the air of a consultation; nevertheless, give him no reason for supposing that you are unacquainted with his professional reputation, if he has any. Converse with him upon politics, literature, the fine arts, or upon any subject but that of medicine.

If you speak with poets or authors of any kind, you may expatiate upon their works as extensively as you are able; eulogize, if you can conscientiously, the elegance of their style,

the justness of their conclusions, and so on. They will be infinitely delighted with your good taste and discernment.

Do not forget that judicial persons like to speak of their causes, their studies, and jurisprudence in general. Attornies, counsellors and judges never quit their robes; and a notary, at whatever time and place, is still a notary. Thus, with this class, you can boldly venture upon questions of law and justice. You are sure to be heard with pleasure.

In conversing with merchants or bankers, profess the highest esteem for commerce, and enlarge upon its inestimable benefits. It is a common topic of union and interest, and cannot fail to be an agreeable one.

Listen willingly to the somewhat pedantic language of the student who has just escaped from the walls of a college. Let him talk freely, if he likes, upon the Eclogues of Virgil, or the Iambics of Horace. Allowed to speak uninterruptedly upon his late studies, he will be led to think well of his acquirements, and be pleased accordingly.

By thus familiarizing yourself with, and favoring each one's peculiar current of thought, you may become agreeable and welcome in society.

CONVERSATION WITH WOMEN.

IF you are desirous of pleasing a young woman, whether she is pretty or otherwise, always endeavor to appear interested in her conversation, however stupid it may be. You need not directly say that she is pretty. If she is pretty, she already knows it; if she is not, you are flattering her. A true gentleman never resorts to a falsehood, even to please a lady.

Compliment with delicacy, whenever a good opportunity offers.

Listen to and answer the questions of an aged or a homely woman, with as much devoted attention as you pay to those of youth and beauty; and, if possible, display more interest in the former.

Speak to the betrothed of the talents or good character of her intended husband; to the wife, of the virtues of her spouse; to the mother, of the grace and beauty of her children.

With a devotee, venture no opinions opposite to her peculiar mode of belief; and avoid

introducing grave theological questions. You cannot, with any degree of grace, discuss such matters with women. Listen respectfully and attentively to her views, and express no doubt or incredulity.

With old spinsters, who usually have some particular preference for plants or animals — some “pet” upon which their attachment centres — represent yourself as highly gratified with the society of all who love the mute and helpless objects of creation.

Never pay much attention to one woman, to the neglect of another. Personal inattention they seldom overlook.

Women generally are not fond of long phrases, and rarely employ great words. Be simple and concise with them, without circumlocution or evasion, and address them with a smile upon your countenance.

Finally, be refined in your expressions, subdued and gentle in tone, modest and respectful in manners. Women have a much more delicate perception than men, and attention to the proprieties of conversation with them must be strict and untiring. Daily communication with gifted and delicate women, will soon convert the greatest booby into a gentleman.

CONVERSATIONS WITH MEN.

SPEAK to old mén of the past ; to the middle-aged of the present ; and to young men of the future.

Seek the conversation of intelligent men ; politely avoid that of the foolish ; and hear with patience and indulgence that of the ignorant.

As men of every description are to be met with in society, tolerance is a virtue of the first necessity.

If you find yourself in the presence of a man of superior intelligence, enliven the conversation with adroit commendations, to engage his interest and prolong the interview.

Endeavor, above all, to speak, not of what you yourself know, but of that with which your interlocutor is well acquainted ; as our aim should be, not so much to attract attention to ourself, as to gratify another's self-love, by affording him every opportunity of being pleased with himself.

If you have the misfortune to be in the

company of a foolish person, and cannot with decency decline conversing, recollect the French adage "Folly comes as naturally from a fool as bitter fruit from the wild tree ;" and be indulgent.

With a superior, adopt a tone of "modest assurance," without servility ; if you speak to an equal, do not assume ridiculous airs of superiority ; endeavor to appear humble even to an inferior ; his gratitude will then allow you more limit than you have a right to demand.

Never speak to a man of your riches, of your advantages for education when young, or of your family's high standing and influence. Such information will more appropriately come from another.

DINNER PARTIES.

At a dinner party, if you arrive before the appointed hour, (you should never be late,) there will always be a chance of ascertaining to some extent the character and condition of those with whom you are to dine, and this chance should never be neglected. Communicative persons may easily be distinguished from those who are taciturn, the deaf from those who are not, the gay from the sad. By such previous acquaintance, many irreparable mistakes may be avoided.

Do not say much at the commencement of a dinner, at least, until the hunger of those engaged is somewhat satisfied; or undertake to relate anything which may require the sustained attention of those present. Their minds are, for a time, under the dominion of their appetites.

A quaint old writer gives the following sage advice. "Adjourn discourse until the stomach is full, — at which time men are more at leisure, and may securely venture upon table talk ;

the observation of which natural rule might have saved Anacreon's life ; who, endangering himself this way, died by the seed of a grape."

Never speak while you have food in your mouth. It is both dangerous to yourself, and unpleasant to others.

Do not refer to your own appetite, or speak of any dish you may prefer, which is not upon the table.

Ask no gentleman or lady at the table to help you to any thing, if there are servants in attendance. The latter are the proper persons to wait upon you.

It is exceedingly improper to address a person, more especially a lady, whom you perceive in the act of raising a portion of food to the mouth. In order to answer you, they will be obliged to swallow hastily, at the imminent hazard of choking, or return the portion untasted to their plate.

It is equally improper to talk in a familiar manner with the servants, or to make any remark respecting them to one of the party. You have only to ask with civility and gentleness for what you want ; and beyond that, you have no business with them.

The host should not invite any guest more than once, to partake of any particular dish. To be under the necessity of declining frequently, when a refusal is once distinctly spoken, is extremely annoying. Many a one has suffered from indigestion, in consequence of yielding to the reiterated persecutions of an inconsiderate host ; they, — the guests, — preferring to risk the consequences of repletion, rather than persist, with seeming obstinacy, in repeated refusals.

The host should never, in helping any one, recommend the article offered, or shower praises upon his cook ; neither should he depreciate the cook, or that which the cook has served up, asserting that the dinner is good, or regretting that it is not good. Neither ought his guests to make any remark whatever upon the quality or quantity of the provisions. The mere dinner itself is not to be presumed of sufficient importance to be made a topic of conversation.

If you should be asked to drink wine with another, (a very foolish custom, by the way,) it is not necessary to utter the common phrase, "Your health," — "My respects to you,"

&c.; but bow with politeness, and drink in silence. ' The master of the house should not tender this invitation to those surrounding his table. It is *their* duty to ask *him*.

When the first service is finished and removed, — “the sharp edge of appetite taken off,” — then the suitable time has arrived for conversation. Let it be gay and unconstrained, as far as comports with propriety. You may relate anecdotes, if you know any well; but recollect that the shortest are the best. Give your neighbors the benefit of any information which you may have become possessed of during the day, provided it is worth hearing. Sustain your part in the conversation; and, above all things, refrain from sinking into a sort of sullen, apathetic lethargy, like a gorged boa-constrictor, casting restraint and frigidity upon all within your influence.

VISITS.

THE AUDIENCE.

THIS term, in Europe, applies to an interview with a King, or a person of high rank and influence. Our republican pride tolerates no such phrase, thus understood. Still, although the *theory* of equality is professed here, and, in many instances, practised to an unpleasant extreme, an equality of *feeling* by no means exists. Human nature is, in all countries, the same ; and individuals, high in office, or of superior influence in society, whose favor and interest is to be sought, are pleased with a certain show of deference and respect, paid, if not to themselves personally, at least to the office or station which they hold. The tone and address of one who sues for a favor, should differ essentially from that of one demanding rights as an equal.

If the audience of an official, or of a person influential by any circumstances, is desired, it will be advisable to gain some knowledge of his

character, tastes and habits. Should he be of a grave, serious temperament, and dignified in deportment, a formal, precise address, without circumlocution, digression or hesitation, is proper. Abrupt, broken sentences, of common-place or frivolous terms, should be avoided. Let your expressions be well selected and deliberately uttered, occasional references being made to the arduous duties of his office. Compliments relative to the character which the official bears in the community, will seldom fail to exert a desirable influence in your favor.

If you find yourself in the presence of a dignitary who considers amiability not incompatible with the discharge of his high functions, never lose sight of the rules of politeness, nor indulge in familiarity of language. Avoid useless prefaces, and all tiresome superfluities of phrase, entering at once upon the business which called you there. Testify by a clear, explicit exposition, that you appreciate the value of his time ; and say but little of yourself.

A quiet, subdued tone, effects more than the ungoverned, noisy accent of one over well satisfied with himself.

It should always be borne in mind, that an interview of this nature ought seldom to last longer than ten minutes ; and that it may not be prolonged, by hesitation or forgetfulness on your part, the words which you are to utter, ought to be rehearsed beforehand. A stammerer is apt to be regarded as stupid.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

THIS day, in most countries, is specially set apart as a time for a general interchange of visits among acquaintances. The custom does not prevail so much in New-England as elsewhere. A more appropriate period, however, for such a purpose, could not be selected.

A visiting card sent to the door of the friend's house, and left with the servant, as is practised in many places, is a negative sort of politeness ; a heartless form, which none but the heartless should practise. The reception of a card may be, in some cases, more agreea-

ble than the presence of the person whose name is engraved upon it; still the fashion is an unnecessary addition to the already too numerous cold formalities of society; and is a most miserable apology for a visit.

When the visit is merely one of social duty, it is unnecessary to make use of the ordinary expressions, "I wish you a happy new year," "May you have many such," &c. The visit which is made, pre-supposes all this, and speeches, compliments and embraces are superfluous, and may as well be dispensed with.

If your visit is made to a woman, of whatever age she may be, speak to her in the language of compliment. Delicately intimate to the old, that the footfall of time, which presses so heavily upon many, has fallen like light dew upon her. Tell the middle aged and the young that the past year has added new charms to their persons; and so on, keeping within the limits of truth, and yet not taking your leave without producing an agreeable impression, by rendering your fair companion better pleased with herself.

Do not allow yourself the unpardonable familiarity of asking a woman her age, more especially on the first day of the year.

If you propose to offer a present in person, by all means be silent respecting its value, or any difficulty which you may have had in procuring it. Make no long speeches, and avoid that most awkward of all scenes, — the stupid hesitancy which indicates that you are waiting to be thanked, and which lays the one, obliged under the necessity of expressing gratitude. Call the present, however valuable, a mere trifle, and converse upon some other subject immediately. If you offer a bouquet, pay some regard to the language of the flowers which compose it.

It is important to remember that, on the first day of the year, the minutes are counted; and, in prolonging your visit, you may annoy those who receive you, occupying the time which they, perhaps, wish to devote to others.

BUSINESS VISITS.

BE very punctual at meetings on business, if you have given your promise to be present at a particular hour. Should you, however, be delayed by some unforeseen obstacle, mention it with many apologies; thus endeavoring to allay any bad humor which you may justly have provoked.

Never conduct business transactions in a light, jocose tone or manner, but remain grave and serious until the final arrangement.

In business, discuss, but do not harangue. Avoid offending self-love, by driving headlong against the passions of the opposite party. Regard the susceptibility of those with whom you are dealing, and let your replies be free from malice or acidity. "Flies are not caught with vinegar."

Do not make frequent professions of good faith, honesty, honor, &c. By displaying a great anxiety to be considered honest, you will invariably beget distrust. The dishonest almost always strive to appear above suspicion,

and generally betray themselves by their over-eagerness to deceive.

When you have gained your object, and have nothing more to desire, you can terminate the interview by a word of pleasantry. When disputants laugh among themselves, they soon become reconciled and agreeable to each other.

“There is no better test of a man’s claim to be considered ‘a gentleman,’ than a scrutiny of his conduct in money transactions. A man may possess rank and fashion, and, by an assumed frankness of character, deceive the multitude; but the moment his purse is invaded, if he be not of the true caste, he will display the most contemptible meanness;—he will take advantage of the liberal; evade, by every miserable subterfuge, the claims of those he dares not oppress; and unblushingly defy those unfortunate persons whose poverty is likely to prevent the due assertion of their rights. Such a man may possess station in society,—he may be an ‘elegant’—he may be a prince! but if he *be not honest, he is not a gentleman.*”

Etiquette, or a Guide to the Usages of Society.

VISITS OF GALLANTRY.

WHEN you have made an appointment to visit a lady, carefully consult your watch, which should be true to a second with the standard time. A moment's delay may cost you many hours of regret.

However exalted may be a woman's opinion of her own external charms, she is seldom very much pleased to be directly told to her face, that she is pretty; for it is exceedingly embarrassing to reply. Admit the fact, of course, she must not. To deny it, would savor of false modesty. A look expressive of admiration is often of more value to a woman than the most flattering remarks.

While in the presence of women, it is indecorous and unnecessary to remind them of that which they already know, namely, the imperfections of their sex.

That which renders the society of women exceedingly entertaining, is the vein of lively, spirited trifling, which usually pervades their conversation, and which, if adopted among

men alone, becomes wearisome, or at least insipid.

A foolish woman may be pleased with flattery — a sensible one abhors it. He who expects to become generally agreeable by this contemptible sort of deception, will find himself greatly mistaken.

Be careful not to take the lead in conversation with women, except in so far as may be necessary to encourage free communication on their part. They are fond of speaking, and usually speak well. If you compel them to listen continually, you will be voted a troublesome fellow, even should you possess a seraph's tongue.

Never allow yourself to make personal reflections, to the prejudice of the absent. It is a common practice, and sorry are we to be obliged to add, a most prevalent one in female society, to pass the time in discussing the foibles of others; magnifying trivial imperfections of manner, peculiarities of looks and speech, making capital of some unguarded expression, and thereby uselessly giving rise to much ill-will. The tongue is an unruly member, and its unrestrained exercise is the origin

of infinite evil. Guard it well. Do not repeat in society any carping, slanderous remark about others, which you may have had the misfortune to hear. The world affords sufficient material for conversation, without resort to the verbal weapons of the assassin.

TRAVELLING.

IN a stage-coach, omnibus, or any other public conveyance, one should consider himself in a drawing-room upon wheels, and behave agreeably to the rules which politeness prescribes. The notable difference existing between an ordinary drawing-room and a coach, for example, is, that in the former the eyes must not be closed, while in the latter one may go to sleep, if so inclined.

Before engaging in a general conversation, observe the countenances, and endeavor to learn the character, the nation, the business or the profession of your travelling companions.

Ascertain these facts by listening, and exercising discrimination in silence, — not by direct inquiries of any one “where they came from,” “where they are going,” “what they do when at home,” and so on. If such information cannot be acquired in an indirect manner, you had better remain in ignorance. Inquisitiveness as to a stranger’s personal interests is not always agreeable, and oftentimes may be regarded as impertinent interference.

The inquisitive spirit of our countrymen is proverbial. The following anecdote is related of Franklin. While travelling through New England, he found that much time was lost in satisfying this curiosity respecting himself. Once, on arriving at an inn, fatigued and hungry, he was questioned closely by the landlord, and instead of answering, he desired the man to call the whole of his family, including the hostlers, into his room. When all were assembled, he thus addressed them: “My friends! my name is Benjamin Franklin; I am a printer by profession; my parents live in Boston; I am on my way to visit them; my residence is in Philadelphia; I left that city about three weeks since. This is all I know of myself,

and all I can tell you. Now, for mercy's sake, give my horse and myself something to eat, that we may continue our journey."

Regard attentively the person whom you interrogate, since it may be possible that in risking a question, you address some one who may find it very inconvenient to answer.

If, wearied with long silence, you wish to interrupt it, and are at a loss for a topic, profit by a jolt of the coach to "bump against" your neighbor, thereby affording yourself a good chance to apologize; to speak of badly-suspended carriages, of poor roads, &c. After this, you will naturally pass to light recitals of overturned coaches, of fractured limbs, broken heads, and other consequent accidents of which you have read or heard. Anything is better than an uninterrupted and gloomy silence among those who have the gift of speech.

Should you recognize, in an omnibus or a rail-road car, an acquaintance who is seated in a distant corner, content yourself with bowing, and do not make yourself conspicuous by loud talking. If your acquaintance is a modest man, you torture him unnecessarily, and do not appear very interesting yourself.

Do not speak loudly of your own private affairs, or those of another; for a travelling carriage is a public place, and imprudent discourse may lead to unpleasant consequences.

Converse about the towns and villages which you pass through; make inquiries relative to the number of inhabitants, their political importance, &c., or relate any interesting associations connected therewith. Opportunities are constantly occurring for such kind of conversation.

Do not hesitate to speak to the one nearest you, even if you have never met with him before. He who will repulse polite advances on your part, or refuse to answer civil inquiries, is a brute, or an aristocratic "parvenu," which is pretty much the same thing.

STREET MEETINGS.

If you think it proper to speak in the street with one whom you know well, it is also proper for you to understand if his business will probably permit him to be detained by you.

It can be easily ascertained if one is in the humor to exchange words, by his air, his gait, or his manner of salutation. If he passes rapidly, apparently in haste, and addresses you briefly with a "good morning," defer your interview, and reserve your compliments for a better opportunity.

If you meet a lady, be satisfied with making a respectful salute.* Do not attempt to stop

* With regard to the method of salutation, although this is not immediately connected with our subject, it may, nevertheless, be appropriate here to add a few remarks. In England, it is now the custom with the fashionable not to bow to a lady unless she first notices you. In France, on the contrary, the gentleman bows first; and not only bows, but takes off his hat. We think the French fashion the most proper to imitate, for the following reason. A modest woman is always reluctant to make the first advances. She should *receive* the attentions of the gentleman in all cases.

her, unless you have something very important to communicate, and then let your relation be as short as possible. The street is not a suitable place for common-place conversation. It is very improper to detain a lady upon the side-walk, exposed to the jostling of dirty boys, and the peltings of mud from carriage-wheels. To turn around and walk with her is the only polite mode.

If it should be necessary to address a man in the street with whom you are not intimately acquainted, terminate the interview by apologizing for the liberty taken in detaining him.

Do not stand with a person, or with a group of persons, in the centre of a walk, whatever may be the nature of your conversation; but step aside, giving free room to the passers-by. Nothing is more offensive than thus selfishly to obstruct the way, to the great inconvenience of the public.

A cold nod in return, or utter neglect from stupidity or absence of mind on the part of a gentleman, would be more keenly felt by the lady, than if the case was reversed. All know how heart-chilling is the uncordial manner, — the unreturned greeting, — when a contrary course of conduct is expected. A sensitive lady, — and what lady is otherwise, — should not be subjected to this chance of repulse.

Never *dispute* in the street. Leave that to cab-men. If you are becoming excited, shut your mouth. No man ever regretted silence under such circumstances. A person in a passion is sufficiently ridiculous even in his own house, without exposing himself as a laughing-stock to the world.

In walking upon the side-walk, the unpleasant collision or ludicrous dodging which sometimes occurs, may be easily avoided if every individual passes to the right.

PUBLIC PLACES OF AMUSEMENT.

IN whatever theatre you may be, and whatever seat in it you may occupy, do not pretend to act as a Mentor to your next neighbor, in giving the names of the actors or actresses, male or female dancers, horses or donkeys, lions or tigers, which perform the principal parts, unless you may be directly questioned upon those particulars. It is gratuitous to

give such information as the printed play-bills afford, and which, of course, can be easily learned by all who are able to read.

Do not venture upon remarks respecting the state of the drama to any one, unless you know him to be interested in dramatic literature; and never talk upon any subject except during the interval between the acts. Loud speaking while the play is going on, distracts the audience, and is as indecorous as to sit with your hat on, or to place your feet on a level with your head.

Never analyze a vaudeville, a melo-drama or a farce, while witnessing its performance, but abandon such criticism to shop-boys and door-keepers.

If you hear any "double-entendre," or expression of low humor, smile if you cannot help it, but do not laugh loudly. If annoyed by the boisterous admiration of any one near you, do not give vent to angry words, or appear disquieted. You voluntarily go to the exhibition, knowing that the audience cannot be select; and it is a sign of great weakness to be vexed by any occurrence which may not be particularly agreeable to you.

Avoid making condemnatory remarks about the actors, individually or collectively, while in the theatre. You are not the stage-director, and cannot alter the evening's arrangements. The entertainment, like a dinner, is provided for you. Enjoy it, if you can; if not, you have the liberty of retiring.

Applaud good acting;—not vociferously, but feelingly. Stage-performers labor as much for your gratification as for your money; and should they succeed in pleasing, ought to know it. But, even if intensely delighted, you need not spring “bolt upright,” as though you were shot in the heart; or jerk yourself about, as if preparing to perpetrate some act of desperation.

CONVERSATION WITH A CREDITOR.

THE following dialogue between a debtor and a creditor, written by Molière, furnishes a good lesson for one who finds himself in that most uncomfortable of all situations, the being dunned without the ability to pay, and who wishes to rid himself, in a polite manner, of the inconsiderate importunities of certain persons who outrage all rules of propriety, by presuming upon their fancied superiority over an unfortunate debtor. "Dimanche" has thrust himself by force into the private apartments of "Don Juan."

Don Juan.

Ah! Mr. Dimanche, walk in, if you please; I was not prepared to see any one this morning, but I can never close my doors against a friend.

Dimanche.

Sir, my object in coming here was to demand—

Don Juan, (to his servant.)

Quick! hand a chair for Monsieur Dimanche.

Dimanche.

No ! I am very well as I am.

Don Juan.

I should be pleased to have you sit down.

Dimanche.

It is not necessary. I came —

Don Juan.

My dear sir, I do not like to see you standing.

Dimanche.

Never mind ; I came to—

Don Juan.

Come, *do* sit down.

Dimanche.

I have not time. I have only a word to say.
I came to ask —

Don Juan.

I cannot permit you, my friend, to ask anything, unless you are seated.

Dimanche.

Well, as you please. (Sits down.) Sir, I came to —

Don Juan.

Excuse me for interrupting you ; but you are looking uncommonly well.

Dimanche.

Yes, my health is good. I came, though,
to —

Don Juan.

How is that sweet creature, your wife?

Dimanche.

Very well.

Don Juan.

And your pretty daughter?

Dimanche.

Very well indeed.

Don Juan.

What a beautiful little angel she is, to be
sure!

Dimanche.

You flatter her.

Don Juan.

Oh no! not at all. And how is that unusually bright boy of yours?

Dimanche.

Quite well, I thank you. But, sir, I came
to —

Don Juan.

You must really inform me something more
about your family, for I am greatly interested
in them.

Dimanche.

We are much obliged to you. I —

Don Juan.

Is there anything I can do for them?

Dimanche.

Yes ; if you will only —

Don Juan.

By the way, Mr. Dimanche, why can't you now, without ceremony, stay and dine with me?

Dimanche.

Thank you ; I am in a hurry — (rising.)

Don Juan.

Well, if you must go, give me your hand. I beg you to believe that I am anxious for an opportunity to serve you. I am really grateful for this visit. John, hand Mr. Dimanche his hat, and open the door for him. Good morning, my dear sir. My respects to your family. (Bows him out.)

The translation of this scene, though not strictly according to the text, loses nothing of its applicability to the condition of a debtor who *cannot* satisfy a demand against him. We insert it here, not as an example to be follow-

ed under other circumstances, but merely to exhibit the conduct of a gentleman during such trying interviews, and to prove that suavity and mild language is equally as effectual as an angry or sullen tone, in escaping from disagreeable visitors.

THE FUND OF CONVERSATION.

A capitalist speaks of his fund in the bank, or his ten-per-cent. stock ; a real estate owner of his buildings ; a merchant of his establishment. Each of these terms is a representative of the value of the property most estimated by the respective owners. But stocks fall ; houses are destroyed by fire or otherwise ; rich establishments may fail. Far more securely fortunate is the person who can say that his property is in the mind, liable to no fickleness of fortune, and available at all times. He can laugh to scorn the custom-house restrictions of every nation ; can transport his treasure north

or south, east or west, without expense. With a well-stored intellect, and a perfect knowledge of conversational proprieties, he possesses a prize which, under all circumstances, is a most desirable one.

Man lives in society — is almost necessarily in constant contact with his fellow creatures ; and, such being the case, undivided attention to the means whereby such contact may improve, purify and exalt the character, is a bounden duty. In conversation, as in public speaking, manner and matter go hand in hand. A proper impression is not produced, unless by a judicious combination of the two ; and no impression is more lasting and more profitable, than that made by a well-informed, agreeable conversationist. The dumb animal opens its mouth, and utters sounds indicative of different sensations. More than this is expected of man. Grunting, squealing, bellowing, chattering, &c., may serve the purpose of the inferior orders of creation ; but man, who regards himself of infinitely more importance, should not remain content with the simple utterance of sounds. He may be rich as Cræsus, and beauteous as the archangel Gabriel ;

but without a cultivated mind, and an acquaintance with the due management of that vehicle by and through which his intelligence is communicated, he is poor and uninteresting indeed.

PARADOXES.

THE author of the French poem, "Des Saisons," Marquis de Saint Lambert, once introduced to the celebrated Madame Geoffrin, who was a great favorite with the literati of her time, a worthy man, known for many excellent works on political economy. Madame Geoffrin received him kindly, as she did every one, more especially those presented by Saint Lambert. The "protege" of the poet was punctual in his visits to her for many months. One day, when he was entering her mansion, a domestic stopped him, and said very gravely that his mistress could not receive him. "What! has she gone out?" "No,

but she cannot receive you." "But is she sick?" "Monsieur, pardon me," replied the servant; "I can only repeat what I have before said; Madame cannot receive you." This, of course, was not to be resisted, and the political economist bowed to the domestic, and departed. He went immediately to seek his friend, told him that he had been rejected, and asked him what indiscretion he could have been guilty of, to produce such coldness on the part of Madame Geoffrin. Saint Lambert took from his pocket a letter, which he requested his friend to read. It was from Madame Geoffrin, and was written thus: "I shall shut my door upon your learned acquaintance, my dear Marquis. His society is insupportable. He states too many facts, makes assertions which are undeniable, and is always in the right." These few words enlightened, all at once, the learned man; and Saint Lambert took the opportunity to caution him against wearying his hearers by constantly and methodically dwelling upon facts, without advancing disputable opinions. Accordingly, the economist changed his system, and was soon restored to the favor of Madame Geoffrin. In fact,

he became one of the most entertaining men in that "coterie" from which he had been so harshly expelled; and his conversation, varied with paradoxes and singular propositions, was sought after by all. He was thenceforth delightful as a conversationist, although necessarily dull as an author.

Paradoxes give animation to conversation; by affording room for the expression of different views. A logical speaker in a drawing-room, whatever he may be as an orator, is a wearisome and uninteresting companion. Absurdity, if original, is preferable to tameness.

Fontenelle was celebrated for the influence which he exerted in his time, as a man of wit. Conversation never languished when he was present. He was faithful to the theory of paradoxes, and consequently successful; keeping up the interest by throwing in as fuel to the fire of conversation, the wildest and most "outré" opinions, if found necessary for the purpose. He called a paradox "the thunder of conversation, preceding the storm of discussion,—the tempest of words,—and purifying the atmosphere of society."

COMMON-PLACES.

WHAT would poets, orators, advocates and others do without resort to trivial digressions, those accessory aids to the imagination when logic and eloquence are at fault? Aristotle and his "learned cabal," — all rhetoricians, from Quintilian downwards, have condescended to make use of common-places; allowing themselves the liberty to treat of hackneyed subjects, to discuss outlawed questions, and to introduce topics which Adam and Eve, in their domestic paradise, were perhaps engaged in disputing about. It is a happy art, that of clothing common things in fresh colors, — making the old garments of thought look like new.

In an epic poem, there must be a tempest, a personification, an invocation and a battle; its merit consisting in the mode of description differing from all preceding epics. A skilful advocate makes an exordium to attract interest towards his client; and invokes the indulgence of the judges in favor of himself. Every

shrewd attempt to relax the severity of justice; every familiar reminiscence and happy association seized upon, adds to the chances of success for the cause which he pleads.

Society, however, is neither a tribunal nor a lyceum, and common-places of a descriptive nature are not admissible. There are personal details, also, which may be termed common-places, but which should be carefully avoided; such as particular accounts of one's native town, his birth, the village-clock or the cradle of his infancy, his school-boy scenes, exploits, escapes, and successful or unsuccessful manoeuvres in business. The world has not the least conceivable degree of sympathy with egotism; it abhors those matters of private interest which self-love is continually dictating. *My* talents, *my* personal appearance, *my* family, *my* property, *my* speculations, *my* commendable or censurable qualities, — are common-places of the very worst and most pitiable description.

To speak of the rain and of fair weather are perhaps the only common-places which society allows; and yet it is rather by a sort of tacit convention. The heavens, over-arching all,

and wounding no man's pride, may be visited, when earth affords no immediately-available subject, — a kind of retreat in which to collect one's forces. But we must not remain in the clouds, or "float long in upper air." Such common-places are soon exhausted.

GREAT TALKERS.

THERE are some who imagine, that, in order to elevate themselves above the common people, it is necessary to avoid their language, and to make use of high-sounding expressions. They study to round off periods; — to encumber their sentences with long words borrowed from a dictionary; — and with their provision of phrases, they frequent drawing-rooms, discharging their ponderous burdens upon the shoulders of complaisant listeners. Everlasting tattlers, they never converse, but always declaim; and the most simple thing, — an observation upon the weather, or a complaint of the

muddy streets, — serves as a text for the most tedious dissertations. There is not a more egotistical being in nature, than such a babbler. The most scrupulous attention and the most profound silence is demanded for every expression which these persons may choose to utter; and, however valuable time may be to the listener, he is obliged to wait until the last words are spoken. A request for an abridgement of the lengthy sentences is fruitless. The pitiless talker continues his verbosity, in spite of every hint, until absolutely exhausted for want of breath. He does not know how to adapt his conversation to circumstances or individuals. He cannot even talk to a domestic, without employing extraordinary phrases, which are unintelligible; and he mistakes the embarrassment of such as do not comprehend him, for a tacit acknowledgement of his superior learning.

A man who makes use of such an affected style of language, with no regard to conditions or characters, is ordinarily a simpleton. By accumulating redundancies, exhausting the vocabulary, and wandering through a labyrinth of bombast, he loses sight of the very first

principles of conversation, — simplicity and clearness. The sensible man carefully avoids this indigent luxury of words, — this miserable parade of phraseology. He addresses every one in the language which can be best understood. Educated suitably, he reasons with the experienced, and jests with the young; and in familiar conversation, he is careful to simplify as much as possible the expression of his ideas.

Taste, the sovereign regulator of society, does not exclude varied and lively forms, charming and piquant sallies; but it repels the insipid uniformity of interminable talking, without ideas, — without originality, — mauling, as with a heavy club, the ears and sense of auditors.

QUOTATIONS.

THE propensity to cite from classical authors was, at one period, a complete literary mania ; and, although it has in a degree subsided, it is still, and perhaps always will be, especially prevalent among those who are superficially instructed. Certain words and phrases, borrowed from the Latin or Greek languages, do not prove erudition. Verses from ancient authors, are reproduced on every side. They are to be found every where translated and commented upon. They ornament the frontispiece of nearly every work issued from the press, and there is scarcely a writer of the most trifling romance, who does not preface, under the form of an epigraph, every chapter in his book. Domestics, porters, shop-tenders, — all, in short, who are able to read, — can easily collect a multitude of quotations, which might, among their associates, give them an ephemeral reputation for learning. It is in the power of any ignorant person, who chooses to make

selections from title-pages, to appear, for the moment, well-educated. It is a dangerous display, however. The truly learned are careful not to exhibit their knowledge after such a fashion ;—and this avoidance of all assumption, is one proof of their actual information. They endeavor to keep out of sight ; to make their less-informed companions forget—that they may pardon—their superiority in this respect. If a group is formed around an educated man, and an attempt is made by the company to “draw him out,” in order to ascertain the extent of his information, he does not enter at once “in medias res ;” he sounds, so to speak, the minds of his hearers, that he may not offend their ignorance. And, when he knows his ground, he sparingly seasons his conversation with the fruits of his research, and does not boldly venture into regions about which they are not conversant. There is nothing more annoying and impertinent than the language of the person who spouts out, at random, phrases which are unintelligible to many ; seeming to speak in order that he may be misunderstood. To

such an one may well be applied the following verse of Molière, —

“ Un sot savant est sot plus qu'un sot ignorant.”

It is not pretended that the thoughts of a great philosopher, or the brilliant sayings of an eminent author, may not be occasionally introduced in a very appropriate manner. We believe, on the contrary, that many ideas and sentiments, leisurely penned by authors of a preceding age, have been as well expressed as they ever can be ; and that there is both instruction and delight afforded by a happy quotation. But as their proper employment requires much tact and good taste, we cannot too strongly recommend prudence in their repetition.

THE CHARACTER OF A GENTLEMAN.

THE following remarks, taken from a valuable little work, entitled "The Laws of Etiquette," may not be inappropriately introduced here. A more complete portrait of a well-bred man could not be drawn.

"A gentleman, in the highest signification of the term, is a noble animal. Viewed as furnished with all those qualities which should unite to complete the impression, he may be considered as the image of a perfect man. He has all that is valuable of Christian accomplishment; its gentleness, its disinterestedness, its amiableness, — without the self-illustration, the studious and systematic uncharitableness of thought and speech, the impertinent intrusion, and the disgusting cant and whine, which ignobly distinguish the professors of modern *religiosity*, and seem all but inseparably connected with the Christian character. Employing, in the regulation of his own conduct, the strictest standard of propriety, and in his expectations of tha

of others, the most lenient; cautious in accepting quarrel, more cautious in giving cause for it; lending to virtue the forms of courtesy, and borrowing from her the substance of sincerity; forming his opinions boldly, expressing them gracefully; in resolution, firm; in action, brave; in conference, gentle; always anxious to please, and always willing to be pleased; expecting from none what he would not be inclined to yield to all; giving interest to small things, whenever small things cannot be avoided, and gaining elevation from great, whenever great can be attained; valuing his own esteem too highly to be guilty of dishonor, and the esteem of others too considerately to be guilty of incivility; never violating decency, and respecting even the prejudices of honesty; yielding with an air of strength, and opposing with an appearance of submission; full of courage, but free from ostentation; without assumption, without servility; too wise to despise trifles, but too noble ever to be degraded by them; dignified, but not haughty; firm, but not impracticable; learned, but not pedantic; to his superiors, respectful; to his equals, courteous; kind to his inferiors, and

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wishing well to all;—such are the qualities of a Gentleman.”

APHORISMS OF CONVERSATION.

SAY nothing respecting yourself, either good, bad or indifferent;—nothing good, for that is vanity; nothing bad, for that is affectation; nothing indifferent, for that is silly.

People rarely repent of having said little, but very often of having said much. This is a maxim well known, and seldom heeded.

It is not always proper to say what we think, but it is never improper to think of what we are to say.

Men *acquire* conversational refinement; women are born with it.

There is much folly which is well expressed; as there are many fools which are well clothed.

Never appear more wise or more learned than those with whom you are. Carry your knowledge, like your watch, in a private pocket, showing neither for the mere love of display.

Speak often, but not long at a time ; then, if you do not please, you will be certain of not fatiguing. Contribute your share, but do not pay for the whole company ; for there are but few persons who care to be considered unable to pay for themselves.

Prattlers have been compared to vessels, which, when empty, sound the loudest.

Those who know little, speak much, and those who know much, speak little. The ignorant man fancies what little he knows to be very important, and is anxious to tell that little to all ; but the instructed man finds it difficult to select from his large fund of knowledge that which he regards the most valuable, and is consequently silent.

Questions are frequently indicative of superiority or indiscretion; for this reason, they are generally disagreeable. The most merciless questioners are justly suspected of idleness or vanity.

A questioner is sometimes one who is really desirous of obtaining information; but more usually he assumes ignorance in order to display his own knowledge.

Whoever speaks upon those subjects which he is aware will tend to make another uneasy in company, is an ill-bred person. — *Swift*.

No reply can well be made to flattery. Nothing is more embarrassing to a sensible person, than to be directly addressed with laudatory expressions, whether merited or not.

The spirit of contradiction is a great fault in the character; it never finds favor in society.

Wit is the most agreeable talent for conversation; but, as it is exceedingly rare, many

substitute jesting and raillery for it ; as when an expensive article of dress becomes fashionable, those who have not the means of procuring it, content themselves with a poor imitation.

The most certain mode of pleasing many individuals, is to praise them for qualities which they do not possess, but which they nevertheless pretend to.

A positive tone is ridiculous ; — if you are right, it lessens your triumph ; if you are wrong, it adds to the shame of your defeat.

Whatever is said in a moment of passion, is almost always regretted.

Foppery in speech is as common and as ridiculous as foppery in dress.

The most beautiful sentiments are comparatively worthless, if badly expressed.

Flatterers are the most easily duped by flattery.

Jesting is a string of words without ideas, — a volubility which causes fools to laugh, scandalizes reason, disconcerts honest or timid men, and renders society insupportable.

Ideas ought to be, as much as possible, the exact representatives of things, and words should be the true and lively images of ideas.

Those who force their words into antitheses, resemble architects who construct false windows for the sake of symmetry.

Women, however lovely they may be in person, rarely excite true admiration, if they are ignorant of the art of conversing well.

A friend too censorious is to be preferred to one too complaisant. The former often speaks the truth, while the latter is constantly dissimulating.

The more you know, the more modest you should be. Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful; represent, but do not pronounce; and if you would convince others, seem open to conviction yourself.

The talent of turning into ridicule and exposing to laughter those one converses with, is the qualification of ungenerous, little-minded men. — *Spectator*.

Good manners is the art of making those people easy with whom we converse. Whoever makes the fewest persons uneasy, is the best bred man in company. — *Swift*.

By reading, we enjoy the dead ; by conversation, the living ; and by contemplation, ourselves. Reading enriches the memory, conversation polishes the wit, and contemplation improves the judgment. — *Lacon*.

Great talents for conversation should be accompanied with great politeness. He who eclipses others, owes them civility ; and, whatever a mistaken vanity may tell us, it is better to please in conversation than to shine in it. — *The Preceptor*.

Good nature is more agreeable in conversation than wit. It shows virtue in the fairest light, hides in some measure the deformity of

vice, and makes even folly and impertinence almost supportable. — *Spectator*.

From social intercourse are derived some of the highest enjoyments of life. Where there is a free interchange of sentiment, the mind acquires new ideas ; and by a frequent exercise of its powers, the understanding gains fresh vigor. — *Addison*.

Locke was once asked, how he had contrived to accumulate a mine of knowledge so rich, deep and extensive. He replied, that he attributed what little he knew, to the not having been ashamed to ask for information, and to the rule he had adopted, of conversing with all descriptions of men, on those topics, chiefly, that formed their own peculiar professions or pursuits.

The silent hatred of the vicious will do you less harm than their conversation.

There is no conversation more agreeable than that of the man of integrity, who hears without any intention to betray, and speaks without any intention to deceive.

Nothing is more unmanly than to reflect on any man's profession, or natural infirmity. He who stirs up against himself another's self-love, provokes the strongest passion in human nature. — “*The Dignity of Human Nature.*”

This rule should be observed in all conversation : that men should not talk to please themselves, but those that hear them. This would make them consider whether what they speak be worth hearing ; whether there be either wit or sense in what they are about to say ; and whether it be adapted to the time when, the place where, the person to whom it is spoken.

It is a secret known but to few, yet of no small use in the conduct of life, that when you fall into a man's conversation, the first thing you should consider is, whether he has a greater inclination to hear you, or that you should hear him. — *Steele.*

One would think that the larger the company is in which we are engaged, the greater variety of subjects would be introduced ; but instead of this, we find that conversation is

never so much straitened and confined, as in numerous assemblies. — *Addison*.

Three days of uninterrupted company in a vehicle, will make you better acquainted with another, than one hour's conversation with him every day for three years. — *Lavater*.

All wit and humor, however excellent it may be in itself, which in the smallest degree wounds the feelings of another, is coarse and unfeeling. No person who possesses either piety, grace, or good manners, will use such jests as are bitter, poisoned, injurious, or which in any way leave a sting behind them. — *Burton*.

All controversies that can never end, had better never begin. The best way is to take words as they are most commonly spoken and meant, like coin as it most currently passes, without raising scruples upon the weight of the alloy, unless the cheat or the defect be gross and evident. — *Sir W. Temple*.

"It is a hard and nice subject for a man to speak of himself," says Cowley; "it grates

his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise from him." Let the tenor of his discourse be what it will upon this subject, it generally proceeds from vanity. An ostentatious man will rather relate a blunder or an absurdity he has committed, than be debarred from talking of his own dear person. — *Addison*.

There is speaking well, speaking easily, speaking justly, and speaking seasonably. It is offending against the last, to speak of entertainments before the indigent ; of sound limbs and health before the infirm ; of houses and lands before one who has not so much as a dwelling ; in a word, to speak of your prosperity before the miserable ; this conversation is cruel, and the comparison which naturally rises in them between their condition and yours, is excruciating. — *Bruyere*.

" Never hold any one by the button, or hand, in order to be heard out ; for if people are unwilling to hear you, you had better hold your tongue than them." — *Chesterfield*.

One of the best rules in conversation, is, never to say a thing which any of the company can reasonably wish we had rather left unsaid: nor can there be anything more contrary to the ends for which people meet together, than to part unsatisfied with each other or themselves. — *Swift*.

There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pool,
And do a willful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle,*
And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!
————— I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise,
For saying nothing. — *Shakspeare*.

The most necessary talent for conversation, is a good judgment. He that has this in perfection, is master of his companion without letting him see it; and has the same advantage over men of any other qualification whatsoever, as one that can see would have over a blind man of ten times his strength. — *Steele*.

Amongst such as, out of cunning, hear all and talk little, be sure to talk less; or if you must talk, say little. — *Bruyere*.



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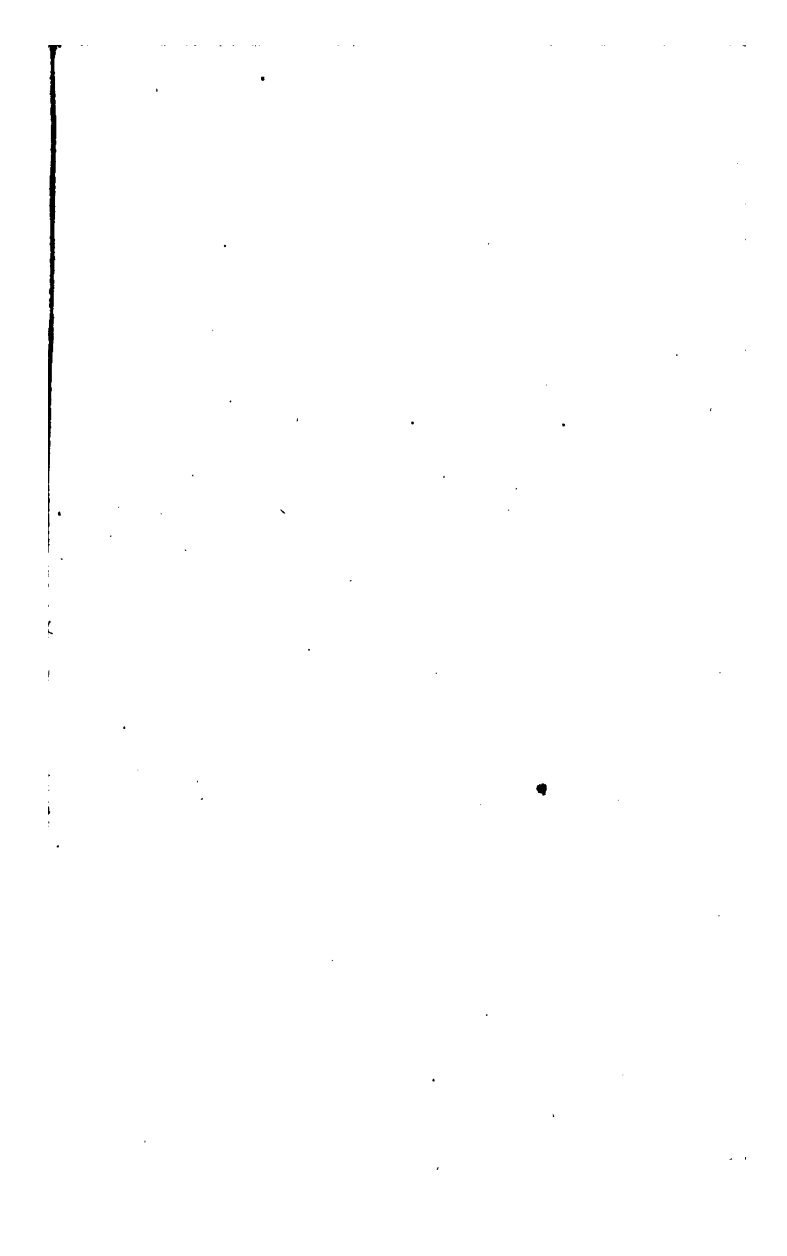
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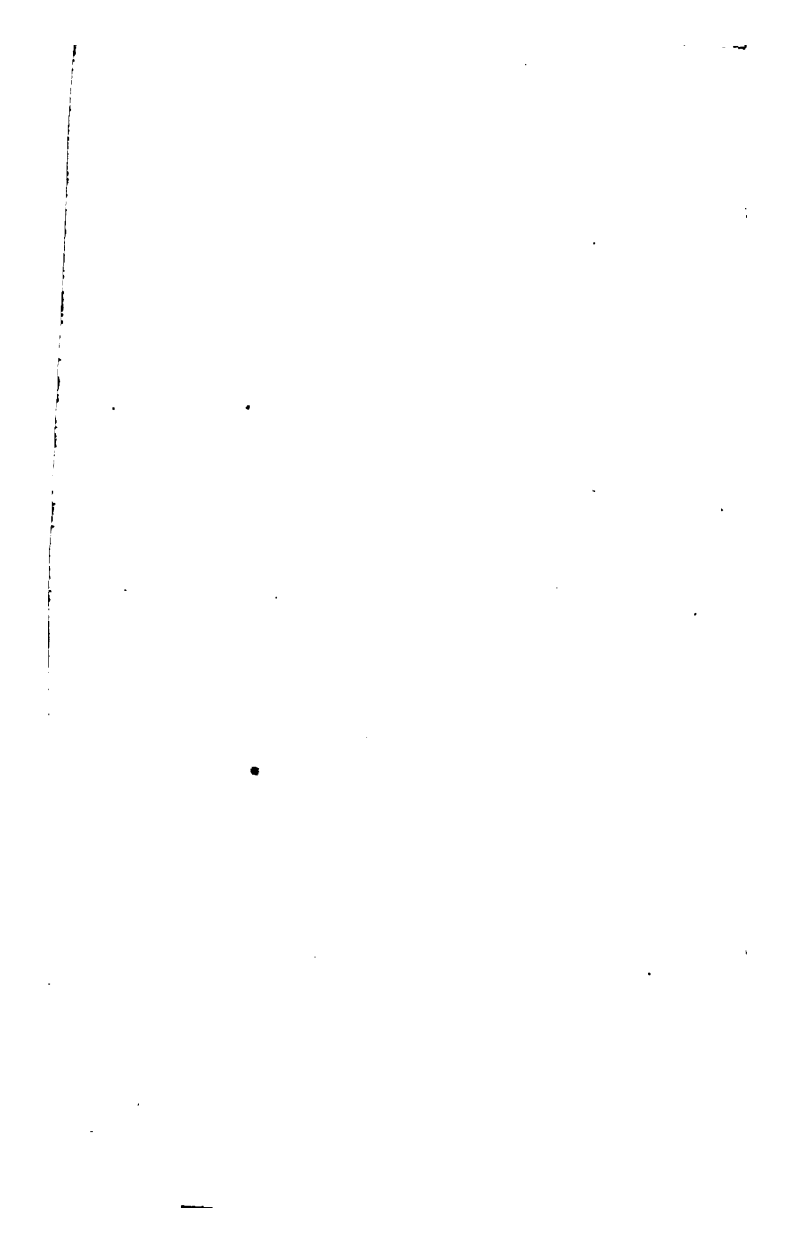
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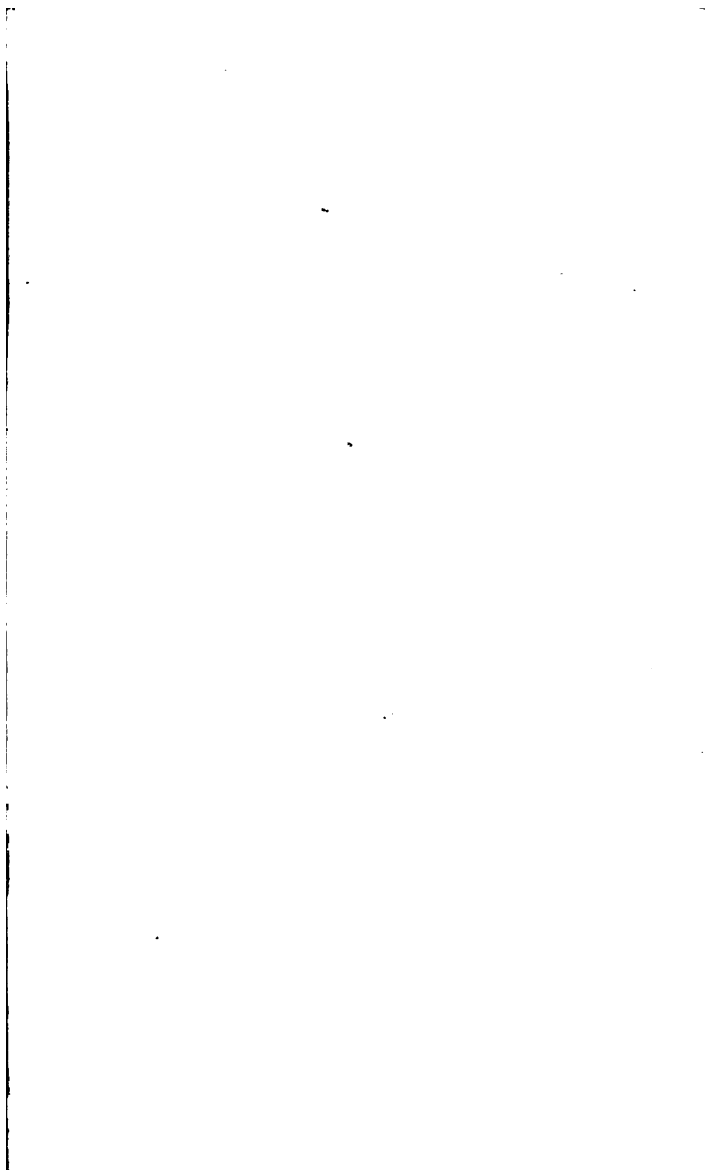
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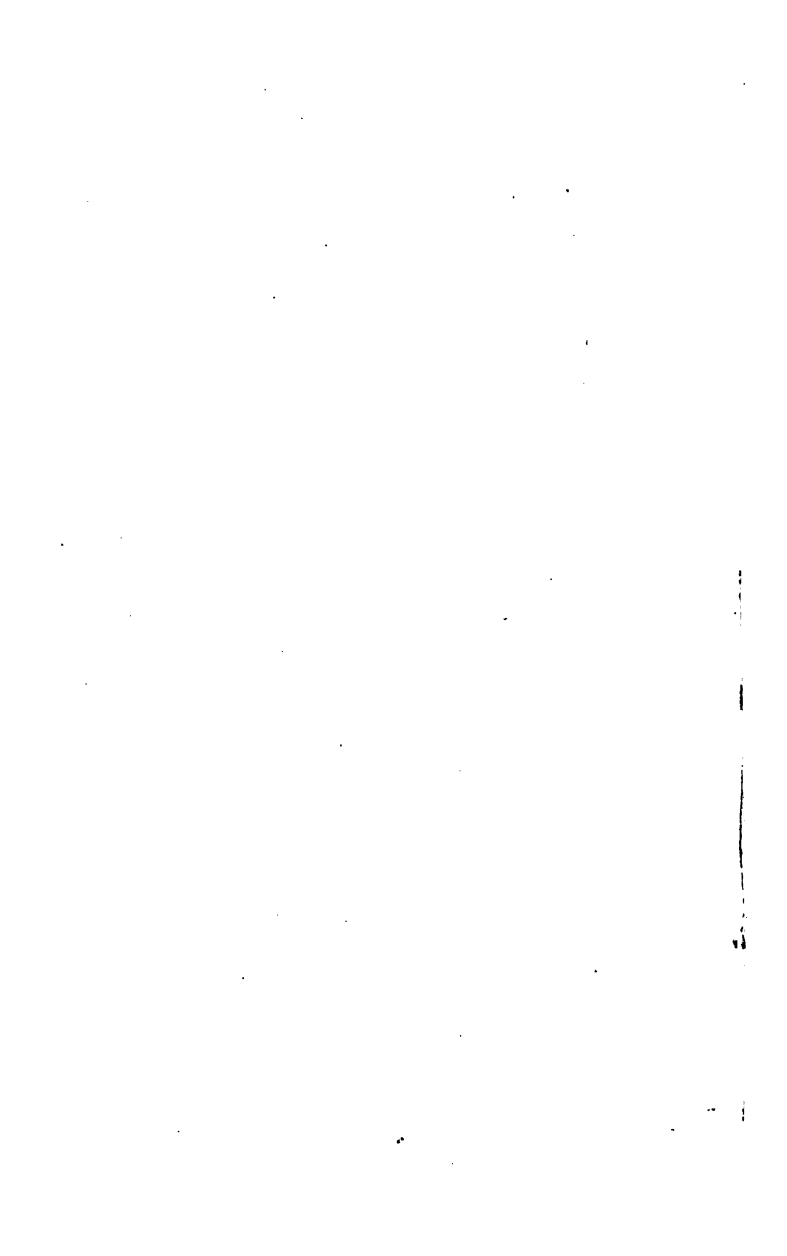
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